

RALPH NADER RADIO HOUR EP 293 TRANSCRIPT

Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. My name is Steve Skrovan along with my co-host, David Feldman. Hello, David.

David Feldman: We're having our own personal town hall today.

Steve Skrovan: Exactly. It's very exciting. And we also have the man of the hour who will be the interlocutor, Ralph Nader. Hello, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Hello, everybody. We have a member of Congress.

Steve Skrovan: That's right, and that's why I'm not going to take too much time with my intro today because I'm very excited. We have on our show a member of The Squad. Representative Rashida Tlaib joins us. Representative Tlaib is a true progressive who focuses on issues that we highlight every week on this program--environmental justice, corporate greed, economic justice--and we're going to talk to her about a whole range of issues, including her aborted trip to the Palestinian territories, poverty in Southern Michigan, Israel and Palestine, and I don't know, maybe the issue of impeachment may come up. I understand that Representative Tlaib is on the record as having some rather strong opinions about that.

Recording of Representative Tlaib: Bullies don't win, and I said, baby, they don't because we're going to go in there and we're going to impeach the mother f-[bleep]-er.

Steve Skrovan: Representative Tlaib will be our only guest today, but as always, we will also check in with our relentless *Corporate Crime Reporter*, Russell Mohkiber, and then spend some time making our way through the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* Inbox as Ralph answers your questions. But first, let's hear from one of the most progressive members of Congress on the scene today. David?

David Feldman: Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib represents Michigan's 13th Congressional District, which includes the City of Detroit and many surrounding communities. Congresswoman Tlaib is a well-known progressive warrior who made history in 2008 by becoming the first Muslim woman to ever serve in the Michigan Legislature. She is beloved by residents for the transformative constituent services she provides and for successfully fighting the billionaires and corporations that try to pollute her District. Welcome to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*, Representative Rashida Tlaib.

Representative Rashida Tlaib: Thank you for having me.

Ralph Nader: Welcome, indeed. Before we get into what you're trying to do in your District, which you have described as one of the very poorest Congressional Districts in America. I know you're working hard to get the minimum wage up, for universal health care, for public-works jobs and other things. I want to raise the issue because I don't think the circle was closed on President Trump doing what no other American president has ever done. He phoned the head of the Israeli government, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and urged him to block you and Representative Omar

from going to Israel and going to the West Bank, exercising your Congressional oversight duties authorized by the U.S. Constitution. And I know it created an uproar and Prime Minister Netanyahu then said, "Well, you can go visit your 90-year-old grandmother, but don't say anything else about anything else." And you refused to do that. And the press was quite critical, and Speaker Pelosi supported your right to go to these places. But then I didn't see the closing of the circle. And so, I wrote President Trump, and I recounted what I just said. And I said you must publicly apologize to them and all members of our legislative branch, admit your error, and pledge it will never happen again in your term. You must erase your egregious, impulsive act from turning into a precedent, thwarting Congressional visits in the future to countries that do not meet with your approval, such as examining your enrichment, and business and all that.

Anyway, I sent that to him in early September, and he did not reply. And I sent a copy to Speaker Pelosi, and she did not reply. Don't you think that the Speaker of the House and Democratic Party, to make sure this never happens again to any member of Congress, that there should be a formal demand that he apologize, and that he say that he will never do it again? Now, it's quite obvious, he probably won't do that. But at least you've done, as a branch of Congress, your Constitutional duty.

Representative Rashida Tlaib: No, I think it's really important that it goes beyond an apology. I think this is more of about a policy. Right? I mean we are, our country contributes a tremendous amount of funds, and resources, and partnership to the State of Israel. And for, you know, members of Congress, you know, part of our responsibilities and our duties is to go out there, explore, educate ourselves, get the information that's needed to make much more better, informed decisions when it comes to funding, when it comes to foreign relations issues and policy that comes about. So I think it needs to go beyond that in sending a very clear message. I think it's very, very important that all members of Congress should have access into countries in a way, not only full access, but also not in a way that limits their freedom of speech, limits their freedom of travel. You know, for me I think my grandmother said it beautifully. I am her dream manifested as her granddaughter here in the United States, you know, free as a bird. And for me to go there to be caged in, to her, was not a celebration of what I've been able to accomplish, but very much in support of some of the oppressive policies and racist policies by the State of Israel. So, I think it needs to be stronger and more an action than an apology, but I also think there needs to be a very clear policy that goes beyond the Trump administration, but more among my colleagues, many of which do agree; some have already publicly have come out and said, you know, they're not going to travel there until every single member of Congress is able to have access.

Ralph Nader: Well, it's interesting that I've had Constitutional law experts who say that's just another impeachable offence, that blocking members of Congress from exercising their oversight duties under the Constitution by going to foreign countries is a blast against the separation of powers created by our founding fathers and is an impeachable offence.

Let's get to the issue of impeachment. I mean that's all over the, you know, pages of the newspapers, and you've come out very strongly that this is the most impeachable president in American history. And the House of Representatives, under the Intelligence Committee of [Congressman] Adam Schiff, has initiated impeachment inquiries regarding Mr. Trump calling the President of Ukraine and asking him to investigate one of his potential opponents, Joe Biden and his son, and holding up almost \$400 million of military and other aide to the Ukraine before that

telephone call, which is a clear violation of the Federal Campaign Finance Laws and itself is a felony, I want to ask you, why aren't the Democrats moving on other fronts because [when] you put all your eggs in one basket, the Ukraine situation, that's riskier than moving forward with other obvious impeachment issues. Our listeners should know that President Trump has taunted the House of Representatives. "Impeach me," he says.

And he's also said that with Article II of the Constitution, "I have the right to do whatever I want as president." So, he's really writing the Articles of Impeachment and some of us on the outside wonder why the Democratic strategy is not one that comes forth with at least six documented, repeated impeachable offences at the same time.

Representative Rashida Tlaib: Well, I want to be very clear from day one. I sit on House Oversight Committee, and I also sit on House Financial Services Committee, both of which have actually proceeded. I mean House Oversight Committee; we've already held three members of his Cabinet in contempt. We've actually, you know, the continuation of not abiding by Congressional subpoenas. I mean I have Chairwoman [Maxine] Waters in House Financial Services looking deep into and have filed a number of inquiries into the relationship with Deutsche Bank and the Trump businesses and the relationship with him being current President of the United States. You know, unfortunately, I want listeners to know this--so much is happening in these committees that is not getting covered the same way. Right?

Ralph Nader: That's very true.

Representative Rashida Tlaib: It's true. We're following his Tweets. We're correcting his Tweets. We're reacting to his Tweets. But in essence, the members of Congress that have been very committed before it became very popular to impeach this president, have been talking about the Emoluments Clause. You know, my residents in the 13th District elected me even though I ran on impeachment. And I said we've got an upgraded version of pay-to-play, is what we call it here, where we have people that know the to the most powerful position in the world, not just the country, is stay at the Trump Hotel, spend hundreds and thousands of dollars in the same breath, you're lobbying to allow your company to merge with another cell phone company, for instance, or a foreign government trying again, in the same breath, lobbying our administration, to look the other way on human rights violations. It can go on and on. But I have been very much present-in all the committee hearings where these are issues that continue to come about, continue to be at the forefront for Chairman Cummings and Chairwoman Waters. These are the two committees I sit on, but I know for a fact that Judiciary Committee has taken an even deeper dive into Emoluments, into conflicts of interest, into even specific things that are related to, you know, members of his Cabinet and some of these actions that they're taking.

So, I just wanted to make clear for the listeners when they're seeing this, you know, things were happening before the Ukraine call. The Ukraine call may have been the one that finally got over 218 members of Congress to say, "Well, yeah, maybe we need to start looking into impeachment." But before that, especially members of our leadership team, you know, have been very publicly out there, very much saying "We're up against a wall. We have to do something about this lawless president, that he's a very king-like president." Congressional subpoenas have been very much ignored from the first day I took my oath of office, and it's very clear to me that, again, that both

Chairman, Cummings as well as Chairwoman Waters, have been very clear that this goes beyond the Ukraine call; that this goes beyond the Mueller Report; that this involves current policy actions by this administration tied to his businesses.

Ralph Nader: You're absolutely right. There are six functioning House committees looking into all kinds of illegalities, violation of federal statutes, violation of the Constitution. And we all hope that Speaker Pelosi will incorporate that strategy, so she moves forward with a full hand, including of course, the Vanguard of the Ukraine issue. Some of these Constitutional violations are actually federal crimes; for example, dragnet surveillance without judicial warrant; that's a five-year jail term, first-class felony under the FISA Act. And I don't think the American people have been exposed to the whole range of what he has done as a presidential outlaw. I mean he doesn't care about the law. As a businessman, he's flouted the law. He's gotten away with everything. And a lot of people are being quoted back home, Representative Tlaib, saying, "Why is the Congress focusing on this telephone call to President of Ukraine? They should deal with kitchen-table issues." Well, a lot of these violations are kitchen-table issues--refusing to faithfully execute the health-safety laws that protect American people, protect children. He does that as a matter of course. He's dismantling the health and safety agencies.

Representative Rashida Tlaib: Yeah, and Ralph, just to be clear, I simplify it for my residents, and they know this. This is really about our way of life--not only our democracy, but our way of life, how decisions are being made. And we already know that corporations have tainted our democratic process already on all levels of government, not just on the federal level, but for us this is about our way of life and how these decisions are made. And this won't be the last crooked CEO that runs for President of the United States, so it is really about putting our democracy first, putting our way of life first. You know, these are the same people that are hesitating to come out, talking about patriotism in previous kinds of policy discussions. But this is the time, if you want to show your patriotism, this is the time to do it because we do have somebody that is President of the United States, members of his Cabinet, that are blatantly, blatantly disregarding the United States Constitution very much in the face of so much pain and hurt by these policies that are being made. I mean if you look at the same companies that are making record, you know, they are making profits off of detaining children in cages at the border. These are the same companies that donated to his Inauguration Committee that continue to make this profit-driven system around the inhumane treatment of immigrants at the border. All of that is so interconnected into corporate greed, which has become such a disease in our country, and now has reached the Oval Office in an unprecedented way. And so, you know, for a lot of folks that say to me, "Well Pence is not the better choice," I say to them, but it's a dangerous precedent, we have to do something about this person now. We have to send the signal out. It's like allowing, you know, a child to continue to misbehave and not holding them accountable or teaching them a better way. This is a president beyond teaching. This is a president that refuses, I mean he has continued to say that, "when I took over the United States." Well, sir, you don't take over the United States. You are elected. This is not a dictatorship. And so, I think, you know, the American people are waking up. And I've got to tell you, I think the American people have been there already. You know, polls seem to me to always be dragging and behind. I think it's behind on a number of fronts when it comes to healthcare, when it comes to corporations, you know, tax giveaways, when it comes to holding our president accountable. And you know, I continue to remind the public, look polls shouldn't be leading us, we should be leading the polls. Right? I mean we should be the ones talking, and

educating, and engaging our residents so they fully understand what is at stake here. We can't just wait until they get it. It's our responsibility as members of Congress and our duty and responsibility to help them understand and educate them that this is not only national security, but this is going to impact our way of life from HUD, to the EPA, to immigration, to everything that touches our lives today.

Ralph Nader: Well, that's very important to convey that; the press is not doing it. It's as if they can only handle one big story at a time--the Ukraine. People should know that Trump is destroying the protections of your health and safety. He's unleashing polluters. He's unleashing the coal-industry pollution. He's unleashing the credit-card industry. There's 71 million people in this country who are called by bill collectors, and he's just pushing further removal of the federal cops off the credit-card-industry beat. He's weakening the food safety laws. He's taking away free lunches from hundreds of thousands of people. He is stripping the social safety net for children. He's not recalling dangerous pharmaceuticals. He's not doing anything about his campaign promise to bring down horrendously high, the highest in the world, drug prices affecting patients. And the other day there was a report that there are a hundred thousand people, mostly low-income, who are exposed to silicosis in these workplaces. And he's trying to get rid of the protection there. So, listeners, if you ever hear anybody say, "What's this impeachment thing. I want Congress to pay attention to our needs." Well, go right ahead. Allan Sloan, *The Wall Street Journal* columnist, just wrote about Trump's trillion-dollar hit on homeowners and tenants. So, everywhere you go, this is an outlaw president. But Alexander Hamilton once defined impeachment as "abuses of the public trust." And we have here a serial sexual predator. In fact, a new book has just come out that not only recounts his past sexual assaults and harassments and lies, but 45 more women have come out with detailed examples of how he assaulted them and harassed them against their wills. And that alone has cost members of Congress and state legislatures jobs. Look what happened to poor Senator Franken. He didn't touch anybody, but he played fast and loose with his friends, and he lost his job. And here you have the serial sexual predator of all time in the White House, and he's getting away with it. That is an impeachable offence. It's an impeachable offence to say there's going to be civil war if I'm impeached. He's the Commander in Chief. He's inciting civil war? He spends money that Congress doesn't appropriate. That's an impeachable offence. He just took \$3.5 billion from the Pentagon for his porous wall on the Mexican border. So, I think the way to educate people and take those polls into the 80%, 85%, 90% realm is to get all this out that the committees are documenting. And it just -- I don't understand why when you have a major committee like you're on, the House Oversight Committee, why the press is not covering more of these hearings. I think maybe because...

Representative Rashida Tlaib: Well, because, you know, Ralph, I think it's because he is really good at distracting the public.

Ralph Nader: That's for sure.

Representative Rashida Tlaib: And honestly, let's be frank, Ralph, and you know this from fighting corporations and talking about not only the exposure to toxins and how it's really festered into decision-making and all of those kinds of things that really change, you know, the balance of power that needs to happen, but among real people versus those that are wealthy, is that it can be really complex for our neighbors. I always try to relate something to my mother and can kind of

sense where she understands this complex system that we have. And that's the thing, Ralph, that's been lost. I remember growing up watching my father get, you know, real access to journalism, investigative journalism that really took a deep dive into the process, into why this is important. It was always really balanced, you know, in understanding the complex issues at hand, and this is a really dangerous time that I see that the media, especially the ones that I think are grabbing the attention of the majority of American people, have not really done any justice into taking a deeper dive into some of these other actions. And I'll tell you, it's one thing, one day will be about him having, you know, military planes land at a nearby airport, so that his resorts can make some profit off of our taxpayer dollars, and the next day they're responding to a Tweet he makes. Right?

I really think that 1) people are exhausted; 2) though, I think the exhaustion is now leading to: okay, we get it; this isn't a person that's there to work for the American people but is there about his self-interest and self-power. So, we need to really simplify it in that way so that folks can understand it, but at the same time, for those that want to take a deeper dive, like you, myself, and others, that really want to be kind of the protectors of our democracy and the ones who are watchdogs over some of these other processes that we know the administration is ignoring and violating the law; I think it's our responsibility to do that on behalf of the American people.

Ralph Nader: Well --

Representative Rashida Tlaib: But I just left a meeting with the EPA. You know, Region 5 EPA office just had an emergency response office in my district in Wayne County which hasn't met SLT standards in the last 10 years, even talking to them; they got a directive in July that they could not--this is to prevent whistleblowing--that they could not engage their union during work hours. Right? Why this is important is that when this happened, it actually deteriorated their power to tell on the administration if they were violating FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] Laws. And this particular woman, who is the president of the union, came and met with myself and Congresswoman Debbie Dingell just today, just a few hours ago. And what I heard from her is, you know, a FOIA request was made and the administration decided not to include two documents that should have been included, which would have led to the denial of this particular permit that would have exposed American people to mercury. And what happened is her supervisors cautioned her. Right? Because there is a directive, it's in their contract that they are prohibited from doing that. So, basically trying to muzzle and trying to prevent whistleblowing activity, which to me is so critical, so critical in making sure corruption doesn't seep into our government--that public safety, and public health, and our environment, and so forth is at the forefront. Especially EPA workers, who are now going to hesitate because they may lose their job. But of course, this person was courageous enough to say that's okay. You know how long she worked for the EPA? Thirty-one years and this is the first time she's ever seen anything like this, where she's prevented from telling the truth.

Ralph Nader: Well, he's taking the federal cops off the corporate crime beat right across like no president has ever done before. It's like a "Go, corporate criminals!" You know, get into people's budgets, ruin their health and safety. All of this is a massive obstruction of Congressionally enacted laws that say you have to enforce the law if you're President of the United States. Well, when do you think we'll see comprehensive articles of impeachment? Actually, the one that's going on today, he's defying Congressional subpoenas for witnesses, for documents, for materials.

He's telling, witnesses, "shut up." And that right there, that got Nixon impeached or about to be impeached before he resigned. So, the obstruction of Congressional investigative authority is one of the most serious impeachable offences. When do you think we will see a comprehensive Articles of Impeachment put forth by the House Democrats? And then the press will cover that if it's upfront.

Representative Rashida Tlaib: There are articles of impeachment that have actually gone to the floor and so forth. But I think what the Intelligence Committee, the House Oversight Committee, we've had conference calls even during this time. The subpoenas have gone out, and people are not showing up to, obviously, their required interviews and so forth, but everybody is responding. And, Ralph, this is an unprecedented time. The Democratic leadership, especially my Chairs of the committees I sit on, they have engaged us at all fronts, and they are telling us day by day from taking the administration to court, to holding members of his administration in contempt. But it is so unprecedented. There is even conversations about, well, even if we had to arrest people, where would we hold them? This is again, something that we've never gone into at any time in history. We are taking this extremely seriously, but I can tell you, I hope as we push forward really aggressively, that my Republican colleagues finally wake up and realize it is time for them to put their country [and] the safety of the American people before their party. And they don't work for this president; they work for the United States government and for the people that elected them.

Ralph Nader: And that will happen, as the public opinion rises and denunciation of this outlaw president.

Representative Rashida Tlaib: Absolutely. And I think impeachment didn't happen, because I introduced impeachment inquiry, you know, literally within a few weeks of getting sworn into office; much of this is because of the demand in the streets. You know, no transformative change has ever truly happened because of something starting in the United States Congress or out of the White House. It always happens because of grassroots movement work outside of the halls, outside of the Oval Office. And I feel like it's coming very strongly. I mean my district is very rare in that it was one of the first to come out and say we have to hold him accountable; before the Mueller Report, before the Ukraine call, before all this, they saw what was very evident from changes with HUD, changes with the EPA, and so forth that we had someone that was making decisions in the best interest of his companies, not the best interest of the American people. Like I said, it's moving along.

Ralph Nader: Yes.

Representative Rashida Tlaib: These articles of impeachment and so forth are going to be pushed onto the House floor, and I'm confident it's going to happen. It would be done because we did our due diligence. It will be done because –

Ralph Nader: It's [interposing] [0:24:51].

Representative Rashida Tlaib: Exactly. And I don't think that the Intelligence Committee, the House Oversight Committee, House Financial Services Committee, or House Judiciary hasn't done their due diligence in taking every avenue, again, through the courts, through holding members of

their Cabinet in contempt for not complying with congressional subpoenas, from continuing to use the current processes for FOIAs and getting information, we just now are obviously very clear that he will not comply, that he will continue to violate the fact that we are a co-equal branch of government. He will continue to be very lawless and king-like. He doesn't think it's a responsibility on his part; I mean he thinks that he's running a business. It's not a business. It's the United States government.

Ralph Nader: Well, it's quite clear now that the courts can't do the job; it's up to the Congress because whenever he sees that he's being sued or one of his friends are being sued, he knows he can delay this 2-3 years, and he's got Supreme Court, he thinks, on his side. He has often talked about wanting to make peace between the Palestinians and Israelis. And one way to get that going is to have the Israeli peace leaders, many of whom held very high positions in the Israeli government, including national security and military, and Palestinian peace leaders come to Congress for a congressional hearing. I think that will break the grip of AIPAC on the U.S. Congress and inform the American people that they're not just confronting militarists over there; there are former generals, former heads of security agencies who dislike Netanyahu's policies intensely and would like to testify. And the whole peace movement from both camps has never had a congressional hearing since the birth of Israel in 1948. So, what do you think of trying to push that? Who could AIPAC possibly challenge--proposed witnesses that come from the Israeli military, from Israeli security, from Israeli mayors, Israeli former attorney generals?

Representative Rashida Tlaib: Look, I mean my first nine months as a member of Congress and coming in, one of the things I really realized, because this is the largest incoming class since Watergate, many of my colleagues, much of which, and I know this will give you heartburn, Ralph, but much of which are not very familiar with foreign affairs issues--much of which ran on a lot of domestic local issues. And even with Kashmir happening, I saw like there was movement in people trying to figure out how to respond to those things. Many of my colleagues still don't understand what occupation means. Some don't understand the difference between one or two states. Some don't understand what the whole movement around BDS is really about. And I am very clear about this because I have spoken to a number of my colleagues, many of which, you know, are genuinely unaware that are not being reached out to in regards to fully understanding the fact that our country, you know, United States of America hasn't really been an honest broker when it comes to abiding by international human right clauses when it comes to the State of Israel. And I would say that for both Israelis and Palestinians, both of which I think have been impacted by the lack of accountability on our part in pushing and making sure that they're not continuing to be oppressed. You have former Israeli veterans who have been speaking up and are in opposition to the military occupation, much of which have not had any platform or opportunities to really speak to the power in regards to that and why it's important for us, much of us. And, Ralph, I love that you are so knowledgeable about these issues. I am at a point where I need to show what the human impact is. I need to talk about mothers and my grandmother and others that are impacted directly by these policies. We need to start there. And maybe others can go to a much more aggressive a process at this point, but I'm realizing things are shifting, because more and more I think young Palestinians and Israelis are now finally speaking up. They're speaking up against occupation. They're speaking up against the corruption of Netanyahu's administration, his continued disregard to even their laws there. Obviously, it's very chaotic in regards to his leadership there. I mean this is a person very much in line with the Trump administration and

wanting to be one of the first to call and thank him for the wall, our president. Again, it is very critical I think that much of my colleagues are educated on what these various policies of racism and forms of oppression that are happening in the State of Israel right now under this little fake name or umbrella that it's is a democratic state when we already know, if it's not black Israelis or Palestinians and others that are continually being detained, arrested--some beaten, killed [and] all of that needs to be exposed. And so, it is really critical that we talk about that specifically. I try not to use those terms. People don't understand what happened in 1948 or '67, but what they do understand is a child being separated from their mother and getting detained at the young age of 12 because they want to have, you know, the economic opportunities, or opportunities to quality education, or be able to walk to school without having to jump over sewage to get there.

Ralph Nader: We are talking with Representative Rashida Tlaib from Detroit and you would favor asking Chairman Engel of the House Foreign Relations Committee to consider having a hearing where Israeli and Palestinian peace leaders and peace advocates of many years standing can come and have their say after some 70 years?

Representative Rashida Tlaib: Well, I think trace solidarity and many of them who came out against Netanyahu and the State of Israel denying access to Ilhan Omar and myself to come and talk to both Israelis and Palestinians about what is happening there on the ground [and] what the human impact is. I would welcome the Chairman [Engel] to have a hearing to say what we were going to see; to invite those same groups that we were going to speak to, because much of them who are talking about how people are getting denied access to medical services, and medical needs, and emergency services--the fact that what is happening at Hebron is so in line with what we saw in our country with Jim Crow laws. I mean all of those things in talking with both the Chairman and others, that if they want to show solidarity and kind of go abide by what they said in regard to we should have had access, I would welcome them in bringing those groups, inviting them to United States Congress to tell the American people and tell members of Congress what we would have seen. Many of the advocates in Bethlehem want to talk about what's happening with the wall there. They want to talk about the racism and the lack of freedom of travel and how that is related to the fact that they don't have economic viability anymore. They're just destroying the city now. And those are decisions being made currently by the Netanyahu Administration. I think it is so important to invite those groups. Again, these are very much I call grassroots groups on the ground that are really about values and about human rights. And they need to be uplifted because those are the people that nobody talks to, but those are the people I think we need to be uplifting. I say this all the time to people, if you want to know what's going on in Detroit, you don't come and meet with the mayor, you come and meet with the block clubs; you come and meet with the grassroots people that are impacted by these policies. And so, I would welcome Chairman Engel to bring some of these organizations forward and talk to them and have it in the Congressional Record.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, I want to talk about voter suppression and poverty in Michigan, but can you just give us a minute of what you're doing on that?

Representative Rashida Tlaib: I mean one of the things that I've done, I have the third poorest Congressional district in the country, and I had a round table with Michigan and families, roundtable with advocates. And one of the things we did is we came up with the Boost Act. And

the Boost Act would help uplift about 45% of Americans living in poverty out of poverty. These are folks that make less than \$100,000; it would be a big umbrella of folks that would get up to \$6,000 of a tax credit. And a lot of people ask me how are you going to pay for this? Well, I [would] repeal the Trump GOP tax scam that he passed that really was more of a shareholder-payment-plan program for the wealthy. And we'd repeal that [and] put it back in the pockets of the American people. We show folks this is how you stimulate the American economy. This is how you help the regular folks out there right now that are living check by check. Again, this is half of Americans that are living in poverty being uplifted by the Boost Act. We've gotten a tremendous amount of grassroots support, national support. People are excited about it. I mean I keep telling people, you know, Earned Income Tax Credit was very much bipartisan supported. It was one of the most powerful anti-poverty tools we have ever had in our country. However, the umbrella for that is so small. So, this is more of an Earned Income Tax Credit on steroids. It's a much bigger umbrella, and people are excited about it. Every time I walk through my neighborhoods, people are yelling, "Boost Rashida!" and I said, "Absolutely," because they do deserve a boost! They deserve a lift. We've been doing it for corporations for far too long. Enough is enough, and I think it's time for us to help our families first and put people first.

Ralph Nader: You're also a big supporter of the job production potential of the Green New Deal, in addition to getting renewable energy and dealing with the climate disruption. You're a major, very much outspoken on that, because it goes right down into every district in the country.

Representative Rashida Tlaib: Absolutely. And it's about time. I mean there's a lack of urgency among a lot of my colleagues, but again, this new class gives me a tremendous amount of hope.

Ralph Nader: Thank you very much, Representative Rashida Tlaib.

Representative Rashida Tlaib: Thank you.

Steve Skrovan: We have been speaking with Representative Rashida Tlaib. We will link to her work at RalphNaderRadioHour.com. We're gonna take a short break, and when we come back, we're gonna work our way through some of your listener questions. You are listening to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. Back after this report from our *Corporate Crime Reporter*, Russell Mohkiber.

Russell Mohkiber: From the National Press Building in Washington, D.C., this is your *Corporate Crime Reporter*, "Morning Minute" for Friday, October 18, 2019. I'm Russell Mohkiber. Investor-owned hospitals are leading the fight against the creation of a comprehensive, universal, healthcare system. That's according to a report from MapLight and *The Intercept*. Tenet Healthcare, the nation's third largest investor-owned/operator hospital, has donated nearly \$630,000 to the Partnership for America's Health Care Future, a dark-money organization created last year to erode public support for Medicare for All. While the partnership's membership roster includes dozens of health insurance, pharmaceutical and hospital trade groups and companies, much of the criticism of the effort to block Medicare for All has centered around insurance and pharmaceutical interests. But corporate records highlight the integral role that for-profit hospitals have played in drumming up opposition to healthcare reforms. For the *Corporate Crime Reporter*, I'm Russell Mohkiber.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you, Russell. We're going to go to the inbox right now, but, David, first, you wanted to talk to Ralph about something.

David Feldman: For those of us who don't have legal training, when a story comes over the transom, where we're getting bits and pieces of a scandal, but the dots haven't been connected, what advice do you give to readers? How do you read the beginnings of a scandal without understanding the motivation and who all the players are?

Ralph Nader: Well, you've got to read a whole range of sources. With all their warts, reading *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, Associated Press-AP, *Washington Post*--that's one series of information flows. And then it's good to connect with the websites of Public Citizen [at] Citizen.org, Common Cause [at] commoncause.org], for focus on food, Center for Science in the Public Interest [at] cspinet.org], and American Civil Liberties Union. These are very detailed websites, and they can get you up to snuff pretty quickly. And then there are the progressive publications, *In These Times*, *The Nation* magazine, *The Progressive*. *The Washington Monthly* has great articles of what's going on inside the U.S. government because they're situated in Washington, D.C. You know, you learn how to avoid the fluff and the nonsense and the falsification of reality on the internet, so you don't even get bothered by that. You don't have to filter it out and waste your time.

David Feldman: I'm talking about the courage to be confused and not understand something. What does that mean if you're reading about a scandal, and it makes absolutely no sense to you, you should have the courage to be confused, right? And let it play out, but not lose interest.

Ralph Nader: Well, you don't want to turn off. If you don't quite get the information you want to grab hold of it and so you feel that you can understand it, you don't want to turn off. I mean turn on *Democracy Now!* with Amy Goodman; that parallels today's news, today's headlines, but I think it's much more accurate, and it gives voice to people who really know what they're talking about but never get on the mass media.

David Feldman: Right. Okay, let's do some listener questions. We've got pretty good feedback from the last couple of episodes. I'll start with this one. This comes from a regular listener. He often posts on our website, David Faubion. And he says he's going back to the Professor Ugo Mattei discussion about privatizing water. He says, "In your discussion about water, there was little or no mention of the state and county role in water protection and delivery. You did refer to the importance of cities, municipalities as you talked about local control. The state and some counties in California, for example, have a bad record in water protection, which includes the ecology which packages water. "

Ralph Nader: There's no doubt about that. We were talking mostly about Ugo Mattei's experience in running and winning a national referendum in Italy to oppose successfully the corporatization of the Italian drinking water system. But the problem with the state and local level is underinvestment. We don't invest enough. And the federal government doesn't help state and local efforts to increase the stringency of standards, inspection, and invest in the pipe infrastructure. But that's just typical. We spend hundreds of billions of dollars unnecessarily on military ventures abroad, but we don't make sure that our children and our families are drinking

safe drinking water without lead, cadmium, arsenic, and other heavy metal contaminants, not to mention bacterial and viral presence in some drinking water systems. So, thanks for that point, David.

David Feldman: This is apropos of today's show. Donald Klepack writes, "John Bonifaz and Ralph Nader are way off base. Donald Trump will not be impeached, but this attempt to impeach will ensure that Trump will win in 2020. I am a Jill Stein voter in 2016, and now a supporter of Tulsi Gabbard. First, there was the Russian hoax and the Mueller Report, which did not end up indicting Trump, nor did it indict any of the Trump children. Now, this Ukraine nonsense where Adam Schiff lied to the Congress and the American people in his opening statement. Simple fact, there is no quid pro quo. Trump will continue to say it's not political, but fighting corruption, and now no one is defending Joe Biden and his son, because there is no defense of Joe Biden's actions. Please, Ralph, stick to health and safety, and stopping economic destruction. Thank you, from a life-long supporter of Ralph Nader.

Ralph Nader: Well, Donald, you need more facts. Listen to our program with Bruce Fein. You will see there are a lot of other impeachable offences extremely serious, ongoing, by Donald J. Trump beyond the Ukraine travesty. And also, unfortunately, you know, Mueller said right from the beginning that he's adhering to the Justice Department opinion that a sitting president could not be criminally indicted. So, although he came up with 10 documented obstructions of justice by Donald J. Trump, he could not move to the next stage because he put those handcuffs on him. And there's plenty of connection between Trump's impeachable offences, stripping the health and safety laws, the economic protection laws of the American people, and connecting in the impeachment process to the health and safety, and economic well-being of the American people. They are not separate and remote from each other by any standards.

Steve Skrovan: So, Ralph, what you're telling us is you're refusing to stick to health and safety and stopping economic destruction. You're going to go beyond that. Well, first he has to give us his gum because he can only walk. You're being very stubborn about that, Ralph.

David Feldman: Okay, this next one comes from Joseph A. Mungai. "How can we convince Pelosi that the impeachment inquiry must include Trump rolling back regulations that protect the air our children breathe and the water they drink?" You were just speaking about that. This is a question about how can you do that. It says, "This investigation can parallel the Youth Climate Strike activists filing a complaint with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that serves the interest of the children's right to life, health, and culture. What do you think about that? "

Ralph Nader: Increase the rumble from the people, and it increases the polls over the 52% of the American people already who want Trump impeached. Once it gets to 60, 65%, Nancy Pelosi has her finger to the wind, and she will open up more investigations or allow the six House committees to pursue their particular impeachable offences under their respective jurisdiction, which, of course, includes the House Judiciary Committee and the House Intelligence Committee. Talk it up, people. It's your republic, and it's your democracy.

David Feldman: This one comes to us from Greg Farnum. "Hi, Ralph. I'm just wondering why we perpetuate this sham of a system of government." (lots of laughter) "If Mitch McConnell can stop any meaningful bit of legislation that is before him, why do we even go through the motions. And, if defeating him will change that, why don't we throw all of available resources to defeat him in the upcoming elections?"

Ralph Nader: Greg, good double question. The first one, obviously, is that Mitch McConnell, once he realizes that it's either the Republican Senators up for re-election in 2020 or Donald Trump, he will choose the Republican Senators and separate himself more from Donald Trump. And the second, on defeating him, there is a very good citizen group underway. They have organized this already in Kentucky. It's called "Ditch Mitch." It's got a website, the "Ditch Mitch" Civic Movement, not connected to the Democratic Party, to defeat McConnell, who is a very bad campaigner and has always won in Kentucky because of the weakness, the default, and cowardliness of the Kentucky Democratic Party. He is being opposed by a former jet fighter pilot, Ms. McGrath, and if she stands tall for the well-being of all Kentuckians, liberal and conservative, where they support each other on so many issues, like living wage, universal health insurance, cracking down on corporate crime, rip-offs, and abuse, she should defeat him handily.

David Feldman: Very good, Thank you for that question, Greg. This next one comes from Mary Williams. She wants to talk about skyrocketing homeowner's insurance. She writes, "California Fair Plan just more than doubled their insurance premiums for California homeowners. I just received my homeowner's insurance bill from the California Fair Plan. The last several years it was \$3,800. They just sent me my new bill for \$8,500, more than double. My insurance agent says they are doing the same to everyone. Thought you might want to know about this."

Ralph Nader: Well, complain to the California Insurance Department and contact in Santa Monica the group run by Jamie Court. It gets a lot of media in California and has specialized in fighting abuses of the property casualty insurance industry. It's called Consumer Watchdog, probably ConsumerWatchdog.org, and tell them about this. I think what's happening, Steve and David, is after the fires in and around Paradise, California and other places, it destroyed thousands of homes and buildings, the insurance companies do what they always do. They get the payback for their losses by increasing premiums across the state on homeowners. This is an increase by the way by any standard of insurance company greed. You get Consumer Watchdog mobilized on this [and] you'll see action.

David Feldman: Very good. Thank you for that. Aren't they finding that a lot of homeowners from Paradise who are entitled to a settlement from PG&E are not collecting it because they feel that if they take money, it will be taking money out of the hands of people who really need it?

Ralph Nader: If you had said that, which is quite commendable.

David Feldman: Touching. But, yeah, it just shows how good people are and how bad corporations are.

Ralph Nader: They have different motivations, don't they?

David Feldman: Yeah, yeah. Barbara Hensley writes, "Dear Ralph, in reading Ruth Bader Ginsburg's book, her autobiography, *My Own Words*, I came across a bit of information I would like to share with you and ask you what you think. Justice Ginsburg said in her book that Justice Sandra Day O'Connor created a website called iCivics, www.icivics.org that is designed to educate school students about the three branches of our government. I thought this website might also be helpful in educating adults as well. What do you think?"

Ralph Nader: We've been in touch, several years ago, with former Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. She's done great work in her retirement on this. The website is icivics.org, and she wants millions of Americans that can't afford legal representation for their cases or being accused under the criminal justice system, to have competent lawyers. She's made some of the best speeches I've ever heard on that subject, and she's a Republican. So, go to icivics.org. It's very usable information.

David Feldman: This is from Reuben Yancey. "Thank you so much for your incredible career. You're a true patriot. My question: Pelosi has a profound relationship with her party's ultra-wealthy donors. In fact, they were mentioned in their acquisition of her Speaker of the House position. They are blocking any and every progressive policy, including the sabotage of Senator Sanders's candidacy, but they are never mentioned as a factor in the party's political calculations. Don't the wealthy use the [Democratic] Party to protect their massive investments in everything. Thank you, Rueben Yancey."

Ralph Nader: Well, Reuben, it's not true they're never mentioned as a factor in the party's political calculation. I've been associated with a number of presidential campaigns, and I've mentioned this in 50 states again and again. Among other critics of the democratic corporate power that has raised tons of money from Wall Street, sometimes more than the Republican candidate like John McCain. Obama raised more money from Wall Street and other major contributors such as the health insurance industry, the drug industry, even the oil industry. And as far as don't the wealthy use the party, the Democratic Party to protect their interests? Of course. That's the problem that has blurred the difference on too many issues between the Republicans and Democrats apart from their differing rhetoric on the military industrial complex, on the military budget, on the corporate welfare, hundreds of billions of dollars of disbursements to bail out and subsidize corporations. So, your question is right on. And Nancy Pelosi, she doesn't like to talk about it, but she's raised a lot of money for a lot of congressional candidates in her party from the big donors, who know how to extend a quid pro quo in their check writing.

David Feldman: I have a question. I was reading one of your columns this week. Did you endorse Elizabeth Warren?

Ralph Nader: No.

David Feldman: Sort of? Kind of?

Ralph Nader: No, I just referred to what she said.

David Feldman: Okay. I was wondering if it was like a subtle endorsement.

Ralph Nader: No. She's the only one, I mean she says, "structural reform," and Bernie says, "revolution." And I think "structural reform" was more appropriate for the column.

David Feldman: Okay.

Ralph Nader: Poor Bernie, you know, it's a heart attack now, however, you see it in the *New York Times*, his one doctor is saying he should just step back because it's too much pressure. Another doctor says nonsense, there are all kinds of people who have these heart attacks, and they become just as vigorous in their pursuit of their occupation or profession. It's an interesting contrast.

David Feldman: Yeah. Alright. This next question comes from Mark Erickson. And he says, "Ralph, the recent development in the Hong Kong protest made me think of your show from a few weeks ago about anonymity in public discourse. Can you discuss any connection there might be between what was said on that show and the Hong Kong law preventing the wearing of masks, an obvious attempt to surveil, identify, collect data on, and ultimately subvert descent?"

Ralph Nader: Well, it's apples and oranges in a way. I mean the demonstrations to preserve the rule of law and civil liberties in Hong Kong are on the ground and being confronted by the police. And there have been rallies apparently of over a million people, which is unheard of in a city of some five million. But the anonymity we were discussing with Professor Robert Fellmeth, University of San Diego Law School was just viscous, lying, defamatory speech, wild statements with no foundations that people, most of them, would never put on the internet if they had to attach their name to it. So, it's not really a parallel situation. In terms of the masks, you know, there's obviously a strong argument by the protestors because now they have all kinds of facial recognition systems and databases, and it can be real trouble. The police are, of course, are saying, "Well, there are some real criminals in the mass here. They're looting, etcetera. We don't want the masks to be allowed." This is a very important struggle going on in Hong Kong and Beijing has to be very, very sagacious in the way they treat it, because if they send in the soldiers and try to suppress it the way they did at Tiananmen Square, it's going to spread throughout China. And that's one reason for the heads of China are exhibiting some restraint. But they already have 12,000 soldiers in Hong Kong ready in case the Hong Kong police can't contain the protestors.

Steve Skrovan: Ralph, I know you're a basketball fan. The NBA is -- what did you think about the NBA's Adam Silver's response to the Hong Kong protest after Daryl Morey, the general manager of the Houston Astros put out a Tweet supporting the protestors.

David Feldman: I was just going to -- yeah.

Ralph Nader: Well, he said the right thing. I don't know how long he's going to stick to it. He basically has said he's not going to restrict the right of free speech by anybody in the NBA. On the other hand, there are two teams now in China, exhibition games, two NBA teams, and the players have been advised not to speak out on public or political issues. Well, that may be good advice given the explosive nature of public indignation on both sides on that issue in China, but Commissioner Silver is well-advised not to subordinate free speech by players, and coaches, and staff in the interest of commercial supremacy and profits of the NBA.

Steve Skrovan: Very good.

David Feldman: This question comes to us from Harvey Channer. He says, "What are the price for your books, *To The Ramparts* and *How The Rats Re-Formed Congress*? Are you offering complementary copies of them?"

Ralph Nader: Well, that's very nice of you.

David Feldman: (laughter) I was just going to say. It sounds like one of my friends.

Ralph Nader: Well, the Ramparts book is published by Seven Stories Press, and it's in bookstores and online, and so we don't have anything to do with administering that project. *How The Rats Re-Formed Congress*, if you want to get a single copy, paperback, it's \$20. If you want to get five copies, you can get five copies for \$10 each by going to RatsReformCongress.org, RatsReformCongress.org. Lots of people are asking for five copies. I hope that means they're discussing it with their friends and neighbors, and they're starting to generate rumbles toward Congress and the White House and turn the country around.

Steve Skrovan: Okay, Ralph. I have a question too. It's about healthcare, and it's based on conversations that I've had with friends of mine and I'm sure, you know, it's being discussed in the Democratic Primaries between the candidates. How do you answer this question: Why can't I keep my private health insurance? If I like my private health insurance, why should it be taken away from me? Why can't we have both?

Ralph Nader: Well, that question was asked by elderly people in the mid-1960's under Lyndon Johnson. They said, you know, we have health insurance, why are you pushing Medicare? And the answer is because you have more comprehensive health insurance and because you're not going to be nitpicked with fine print, and co-pays, and waivers, and deductibles, and because everybody is going to be covered. You know, people can say I work for this company and I work for that company and I have good insurance and I've got a union. Yeah, but look what's happening. They can lay you off. They can reduce your health insurance in union negotiations the way General Motors wants to do now with the UAW workers who are on strike. They can increase your co-pays. They can say this type of procedure we're not going to pay for. So, that's the trade-off. The trade-off is insurance policies that you have that you like now, but they are an insecure pedestal. And a lot of people who have said what you've said, Steve, have not really used their insurance policy with major illnesses. And it's only when you've got a major illness that you know what the jeopardies are in corporate insurance policies. And the corporations themselves want to get rid of insuring workers because they want to compete with companies in Canada and Western Europe where they have single-payer government-funded health insurance, and they don't have to pay health insurance for their workers, which they think is a competitive disadvantage. So, it's not only much more comprehensive, it's not only universal, it is the waive of the future because these U.S. corporations are pretty fed up with gigantic increases and healthcare costs, hospital costs, drug costs, and they really want to unload it.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you for your questions. Keep them coming on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* website. I want to thank our guest again, Representative Rashida Tlaib.

David Feldman: Join us next week on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* when we speak with author Steve Greenhouse about his new book, *Beaten Down, Worked Up*. Thank you, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you, everybody. You heard the discussion on impeachment, listeners. Start the rumble from the people back home. It helps for you to get *How the Rats Re-Formed the Congress* book--the book that shows you how to mobilize in every congressional district so that you can summon your Senators and Representatives directly to your own town meetings. That'll change the situation on Capitol Hill.

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